

# The 1999 Annual Major Range and Test Facility Base (MRTFB) Review

## Working Together + Speaking With One Voice = Success

NORENE L. BLANCH

**P**eople, processes, and facilities define the Test and Evaluation (T&E) infrastructure. The third element, facilities, covers 22 of the Department of Defense's (DoD) major T&E ranges and facilities. These multi-Service-user facilities include the Major Range and Test Facility Base (MRTFB) and provide "T&E support to DoD components responsible for developing or operating defense materiel and weapons systems."<sup>1</sup>

This enables DoD to "safely and effectively test the capabilities of a variety of advanced and highly capable weapon systems in environments representative of conditions found around the world."<sup>2</sup>

Training ranges are important because they offer the T&E community cost-effective opportunities for Operational Test and Evaluation (OT&E), while giving the warfighter an opportunity to operate the systems being tested under realistic conditions.<sup>3</sup>

Because of that importance, the MRTFBs came together for the 1999 Annual Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Test Capability, Budget, and Investment Review held Aug. 24 - 26, Piney Point, Md.

In a relaxed atmosphere, representatives from the MRTFBs briefed the OSD Director of Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E) Philip E. Coyle, on their organizations' operations, success stories, lessons learned, and issues of concern.

### MRTFB Brief Adds Value

This was Coyle's fourth MRTFB review, and although many changes have occurred in the structure of OSD T&E since his first conference, he said, "One thing that hasn't changed in these four years is the value of these meetings."

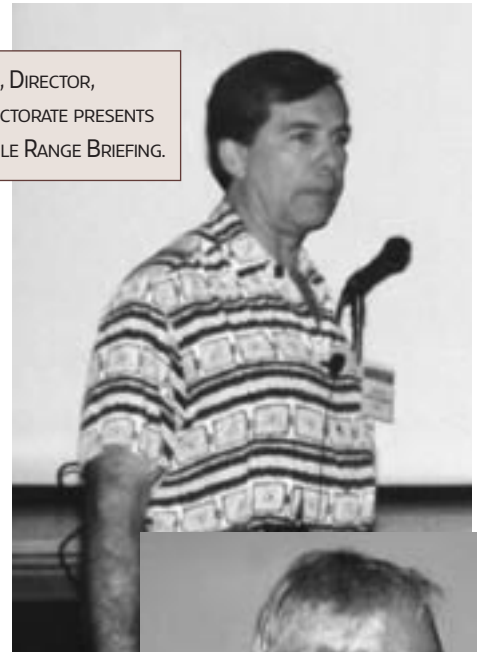
Coyle places value on the MRTFB briefings because discussions and materials presented at the reviews benefit him throughout the year, helping him respond to inquiries, prepare reports, and talk to the military services, senior OSD officials, and Congress about range issues.

Coyle intends to use feedback from the MRTFBs to organize future conferences that meet the needs of the ranges and facilities and to ensure that this and future reviews will be as beneficial to the participants as to him. And this year, he has added a new feature that will help the MRTFBs view their work from a slightly different perspective — Operational Test Agency (OTA) involvement.

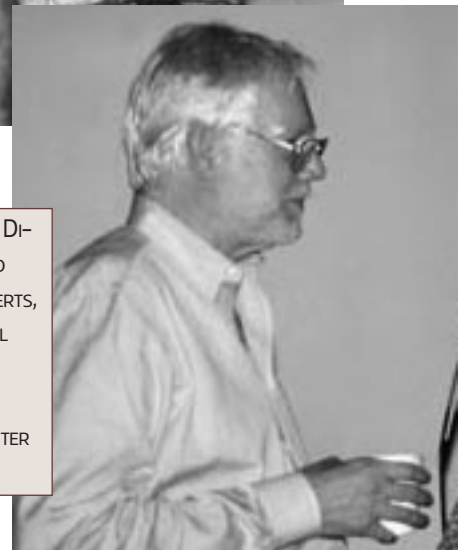
### OTA INVOLVEMENT

"This year I invited the Operational Test Agencies to come speak and participate," said Coyle. "I did that because it's really

CHARLES R. GARCIA, DIRECTOR, MATERIEL TEST DIRECTORATE PRESENTS WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE BRIEFING.



FROM LEFT: PHILIP E. COYLE III, DIRECTOR, OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION, AND CARL E. ROBERTS, DIRECTOR, REDSTONE TECHNICAL TEST CENTER MEET PRIOR TO ROBERTS' BRIEFING ON THE REDSTONE TECHNICAL TEST CENTER INVESTMENT PROGRAM.



in the spirit of the reorganization of OSD Test and Evaluation."

Coyle explained the reasons why Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology) Jacques S. Gansler reorganized the Office of the Secretary of De-

STEVEN K. WHITEHEAD, TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, COMMANDER, OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION FORCE (COM-OPTEVFOR) PRESENTS THE NAVY OPERATIONAL TEST AGENCY BRIEFING.



COYLE PRESENTS OVERALL BRIEF TO THE RANGE DIRECTORS.



GEORGE R. RYAN JR., DEPUTY DIRECTOR, RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, TEST AND EVALUATION, CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS PRESENTS THE NAVY/MARINE CORPS BRIEFING.



CONFERENCE ATTENDEES DURING THE DINNER BREAK.

fense (OSD) T&E. "The first [reason], was to bring much of OSD Test and Evaluation together into a single organization, but philosophically the thing that he [Gansler] was really after was to get operational testers and all testers involved early in the programs, helping them to solve problems much earlier. And so I wanted the Operational Test Agency

commanders to be represented this week and have a chance to talk so that you can hear about their needs, so they can hear about your capabilities, and so that you both can work more closely together in the future."

#### THE "FACE" OF DOT&E

Coyle also invited action officers from his staff to attend the conference. He shared the success story of Live Fire Test and Evaluation's (LFT&E) move from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition & Technology to

his office, Operational Test & Evaluation (OT&E), almost five years ago.

Coyle refers to his action officers as, "the 'face' of DOT&E to the outside world," who depend on the expertise of James F. O'Bryon, DOT&E/Live Fire Test and Evaluation (DOT&E/LFT&E), and his staff for "advice, counsel, and policy direction," on Live Fire issues.

"Jim O'Bryon, arrived with very few people. He did not begin to have enough people to be able to assign them all to a

reasonable number of programs. My office tracks a couple hundred programs, and it just was not possible for him [O'Bryon] to put the same level of effort into Live Fire that we put into Operational Test and Evaluation, and so faced with that practical reality, we had our regular operational test and evaluation action officers take responsibility for also representing Live Fire to program managers."

The presence of Coyle's action officers will prove beneficial to the test ranges as they will be working together with the Service's Operational Test Agencies and with others on testing programs, usually at the test location. Coyle is asking his action officers to become advocates for range capabilities in an analogous way just as they have become advocates for LFT&E.

#### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

"In the future, we are going to be looking at the composition of the MRTFBs and the policies that effect the MRTFBs," Coyle said. "I have also been invited to serve on the Board of Operating Directors; and with them we are going to be looking at whether there are ways to simplify the T&E committee structure." Coyle also added that the ranges can expect a requirement from Congress to do more studies in the future.

**COOPERATION WITH DEFENSE SCIENCE BOARD (DSB) STUDIES**  
"As most of you are aware," said Coyle, "Congress has already asked for a new study on Test and Evaluation." Coyle is optimistic about the outcome of the study when coupled with hard work, and a close working relationship between the DSB and the T&E community.

He has been heavily involved in DSB activities in the past and believes, "When we work closely with the DSB, their study groups can be very helpful," and Coyle intends to continue to play an active role in cooperation with DSB studies.

**OSD'S COMMITMENT TO T&E INVESTMENTS**  
Coyle concluded by describing himself as an "advocate for new investments" in test and evaluation. "And that isn't going to stop," he said. "That is something that I am going to continue to do; and to that end, I'm going to need your help in identifying where you think new investments are needed most."

#### OSD T&E Issues

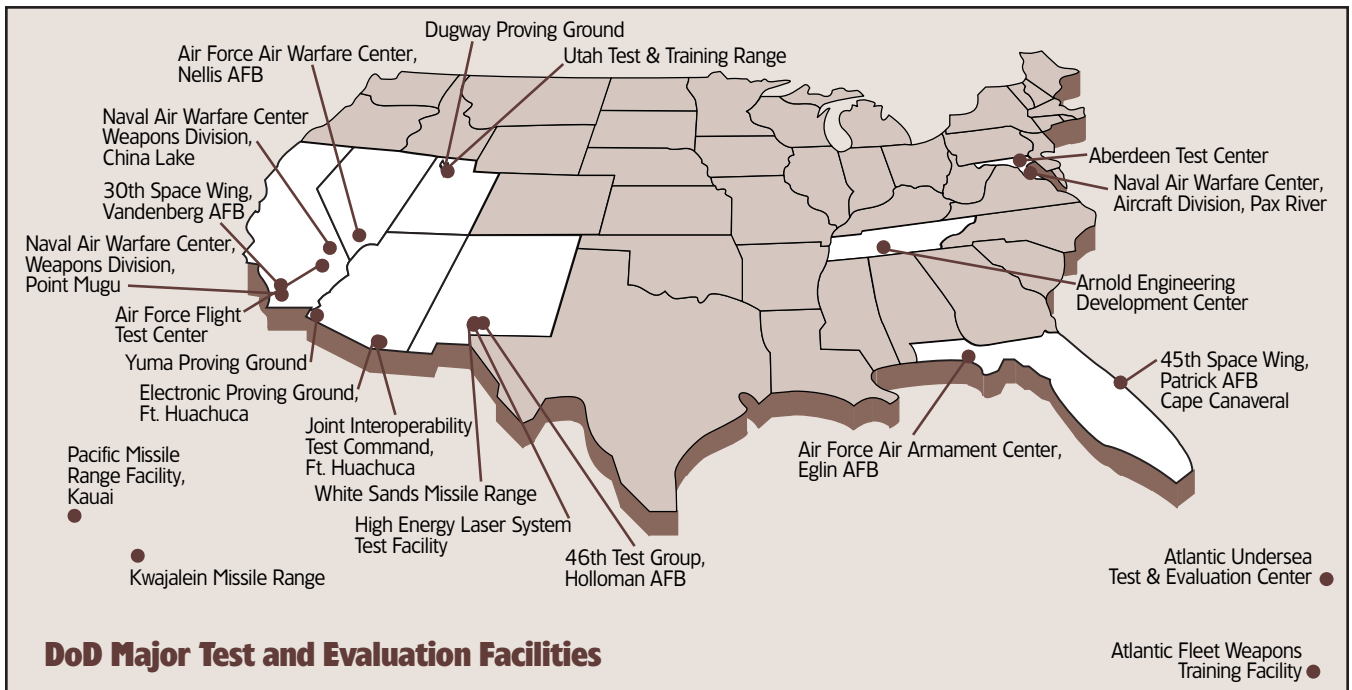
John F. Gehrig, Deputy Director, Operational Test and Evaluation/Resources and Ranges (DOT&E/RR), picked up where Coyle left off in a seamless transition as he discussed OSD issues with the attendees.

Gehrig echoed Coyle's words as he emphasized the value of the MRTFB review. He also stressed the benefits of Coyle's involvement with not only the DSB and the Board of Directors; but he also spoke about the importance of Coyle's participation on other boards and groups.

"The Director [Coyle] has picked up some very important responsibilities that I think are going to go a long way in helping us to defend the ranges. One of the most important things that's happening this year is that he has been invited to be a member of the Defense Resources Board, which is the organization in OSD that takes a look at the resources and looks at how the money is being spent.

"It is a very important board to be on if you want to have an influence on where money goes in OSD. Another organization that does a lot of work for the Defense Resources Board is the Program Review Group; and DOT&E also has representation on that, so I think that's one really big step toward getting us involved in the OSD funding picture," said Gehrig.

And adequate funding is needed to counteract the effects of 10 years of downsizing, which has taken its toll on T&E's MRTFBs.



## Common Trends Affecting T&E's Infrastructure

Although the workload for the MRTFBs remains steady, most ranges continue to report drastic workforce reductions.

Between fiscal year 1987 and 1999, the MRTFB workforce decreased by 9,200 people. Since fiscal year 1990, the number of military personnel available for assignment at MRTFB facilities decreased 39 percent. By fiscal year 1998, civilian contractors accounted for approximately 53 percent of the MRTFB workforce.<sup>4</sup>

Not only have MRTFB managers seen the civilian workforce shrinking due to reductions-in-force, lack of promotion opportunities, and slow to non-existent hiring practices, but they have also noted an increase in the average age of these highly skilled government workers over the past 10 years.

The average age of these employees is 46 to 48 years old. The test ranges expressed great concern over this issue because not only is the civilian government workforce aging, but this age group is expected to retire almost simultaneously with little or no qualified replacements on the horizon to carry on where the older, more experienced federal employees are leaving off.<sup>5</sup>

So far, the ranges have managed to meet the demands of the warfighter despite the budget constraints that have led to the reduction in funding for T&E's infrastructure and personnel, but not without major changes to their processes.

The MRTFBs have initiated major process improvements: leveraging technology to improve the efficiency and productivity of their facilities; partnering with other government agencies, industry, and allies to leverage each other's facilities; and reengineering their business processes to improve performance and to provide more affordable testing through better business practices.<sup>6</sup>

Even with the implementation of changes to their business processes, the MRTFBs are still challenged with the need to invest and modernize fa-

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cilities that are more than 30 to 40 years old.<sup>7</sup>

As the MRTFB commanders gear up for the 21st century, concern about future initiatives emerges. "In the future, weapon systems will be even more complex; they will have to be interoperable and function as a system-of-systems; they will be highly dependent on information and digitization; and they will be deployed under a broader and more dynamic set of conditions. Clearly we must have a more capable and robust infrastructure if we are to provide our warfighter with weapons that work."<sup>8</sup>

### Have We Turned The Corner?

Gehrig painted a financial picture of DoD's budget as it relates to the federal budget. He spoke of a decrease in funding for both Defense and T&E.

"Have we turned the corner 'with a question mark?'" asked Gehrig. "And I'd say, that's about where we are right now. We are looking at some minor increases, but we're not sure we've turned the corner."

The MRTFB's funding has decreased about 30 percent over the past decade. Likewise, institutional funding is down \$2.7 billion, and investments in mod-

ernization have taken some heavy hits and are down approximately 29 percent, reported Gehrig.

"But we have some good news this year. It looks like the Services are going to have a little bit more [funding] this year than they have had in the past, and I think this is important," stressed Gehrig. And funding is not the only challenge faced by the MRTFBs.

Inadequate funding greatly disturbs the balance of the three elements of the T&E infrastructure. Gehrig illustrated the effect that one element has on the other. "With the definition of infrastructure being people, processes, and facilities, if you have taken a lot of your infrastructure out of people and you try to improve your processes, you really need to improve your facilities or you are going to 'death spiral,' and that's the message that we have been trying to get out."

And with a 12-percent increase in funding for the purposes of investment and modernization expected by the Services between fiscal 2000 and fiscal 2005, "It seems that the MRTFBs have been somewhat successful in getting their message out," continued Gehrig.

"But we're really successful when we get the message out with one voice," he stressed. "With one voice from the ranges, one voice from the Service staffs, and one voice from OSD ... That is how we have had the most success, that is how we will continue to have the most success, and that is why we think it is a great step to have OSD on the Board of Directors where we can get together and speak with one voice."

## REFERENCES

1. DOT&E FY98 Annual Report (Director, Operational Test & Evaluation, February 1999), pp. II-9 - II-10.
2. Ibid, p. II-9.
3. Ibid, p. II-10.
4. Ibid, pp. II-5 - II-6.
5. Ibid, p. II-6.
6. Ibid, p. II-7.
7. Ibid, p. II-12.
8. Ibid, p. II-1.